

Catholics and Rituals.

Two Catholic newspapers most friendly to the Knights of Columbus have recently published remarks on the head of society rituals, which are positively damning for these self-styled knights and kindred Catholic (?) organizations that can not get along without a ritual. These two newspapers are the *Catholic Transcript* of Hartford and the *Catholic Mirror* of Baltimore. We quote from the *Mirror*, which, in its edition of June 14th, cited the *Transcript*, making that paper's remarks the text of its own observations :—

The *Catholic Transcript*, commenting on the refusal of Msgr. Kennedy, of Syracuse, N. Y., to allow a fraternal organization to perform its ritual at the burial of a Catholic member, after stating the Catholic view, that "the commitment service is counted an act of religion, and the Church claims the competency and the sole right to define what acts of religion shall be performed over the remains of those who die within her communion," declared : "It is easy for amateur ritual-makers to run into poetic excess. It is still easier for them to embody heresy. *Catholic members of societies should do all in their power to discourage the ritualistic itching of the organizations with which they are affiliated.**) High-sounding funeral services appeal to the ears of the afflicted. Little by little they come to supplant in the minds of the indiscriminating the approved and consecrated liturgy of the Church. This will not do."

The *Catholic Mirror* calls this "a wise note of warning, not only to Catholic members of fraternal organizations, but to all societies composed of Catholics,*) in whole or in part ;" and continues :

"It is true that the Catholic ritual is beautiful enough and consoling enough for even the most exquisite taste, and yet we have heard Catholic gentlemen speaking in laudatory terms of the almost meaningless liturgy of non-Catholic fraternal orders, declaring 'they had never seen anything like it.' Probably they have not, but when they go on to praise its beauty and its impressiveness and the like as beyond anything that one could imagine, they but show their ignorance of the Church's rites and ceremonies, with their deep symbolical meaning. No twentieth century poet or artist could possibly improve in the slightest detail on the Church's ritual. It is the work of God's saints and has been devised through the ages by the best genius and purest de-

votion of the Christian era. There is less prospect of it being surpassed in these times or in days to come than there is of some contemporary dauber surpassing the greatest conceptions of Michael Angelo or of Rafael.

*“Let our Catholics, members of Catholic or of non-Catholic organizations, cease such idle, ignorant prating about societies’ rituals, and strive to learn something of the beauty and grandeur of the Church’s ceremonies.”**) They will learn the deep mystical meaning of the Church’s rites, and be better prepared to assist at its services with an intelligent and proper devotion.”

We are glad to see at least two of our hitherto Knights of Columbus-mad contemporaries returning to their sober senses. It is the beginning, we hope, of a wholesome reaction.

*) Italics ours.

The Philosophy of Laughter.



FRENCH writer, *M. L. Dugas*, has recently published a treatise on the philosophy of laughter.*)

The title, ‘Psychology of Laughter,’ is somewhat misleading, for the author himself recognizes that he is dealing with a phenomenon which appertains both to physiology and psychology.

M. Dugas is by no means the first philosopher who has undertaken to treat the problem of laughter; he has had numerous predecessors, each one of whom has proffered his own theory and explanation.

One theory may be called the physiological. It is that of Spencer and Bain, according to whom laughter is produced by an excess of nervous force, which first discharges itself into the respiratory and phonetic muscles and then irradiates into the muscles of the face. It proceeds, therefore, not from emotion, but from the dissipation of accumulated nervous energy which follows emotion. This theory, while not entirely unfounded, is insufficient. For while it applies to the laughter caused by tickling and to the facial contortions of the idiot, it leaves quite a number of other species unexplained.

Others define laughter as a phenomenon of sociability; but

*) *Psychologie du rire, par L. Dugas.* Paris, Alcon, 1902. 12mo. pp. vii—178.

sympathy, which is at the bottom of sociability, increases rather than produces laughter.

The intellectualist theory holds that laughter is born of the consciousness of contradiction, in its broadest sense, involving that which is inconsistent, absurd, unforeseen, etc. Contradiction is at the bottom of all laughable things, but how and why does it produce laughter?

The pessimist theory attributes laughter to pride and malignity. The laughers enjoys being above and beyond folly, moral weaknesses, and physical infirmities. However, this sentiment alone does not cause laughter, unless there supervenes the perception of a contradiction or surprise. Malignity may explain the laughter of cruelty; but is there not such a thing as intellectual laughter?

According to the aesthetic theory, playfulness is the principle of laughter—the quality or state of being sportive, of showing a sportive fancy or sprightly humor, of giving the imagination free play, of taking everything easy. But this is not a philosophical explanation.

M. Dugas concludes from these diverse theories and from observation, that the different kinds of laughter not only differ in degree, but are of entirely different nature; that there exists not only laughter, but laughers, and that the various explanations mentioned above are both true and false—true, inasmuch as they are applicable to one kind or another; false, because inapplicable to all. He thinks that the smile will have to be examined for itself, as being in some cases a weak laugh, and then again something entirely different, responding to different sentiments. And he adds: "There will be as many kinds of laughter as there are personalities, who respond each in his own peculiar fashion to various emotions; in a word—laughter is essentially relative." Being the expression of individuality, it assumes as many forms as there are characters, minds, and soul-conditions, and therefore can not be brought under one general theory nor become the object of a science.

Rev. P. Lucien Roure, S. J., reviewing Dugas' book in the *Etudes* [June 5th], confesses to a degree of disappointment at this conclusion. No doubt, he says, there are species of laughter; but it must be possible to bring them under a common genus. Which is the generic element or cause of laughter? Surely it can not be undiscoverable. The various solutions offered by different philosophers serve to explain the specific elements of each kind of laughter in particular. The generic element is probably to be found in a combination of nerve and intellectual forces.

Clearly, Dugas has by no means exhausted his interesting

theme. Pesch (*Inst. Psychol.*, iii, 423) defines laughter: "Risus est motus vel vibratio quaedam subita diaphragmatis et muscularum thoracis et oris ut orta ex certarum rerum cognitione et consequenti delectatione." This definition contains both the physiological element ("a sudden movement or vibration of the diaphragm and the thoracic and facial muscles") and the psychological ("arising from the cognition of certain things and a consequent delectation.")

On the physiological aspect of laughter we read in G. de Gohren's 'Vortrag über die Ausgleichungsgesetze im Leben der Organismen':

"If a man, carried away by a humorous expression or a telling joke, bursts into laughter, there was a serpent hid among the flowers, and he has escaped the danger by laughing. A joke is nothing else than, and has about the same effect as, tickling. It is pretty generally known that a person may be tickled to death: the cause is contraction of the smallest brain arteries. To remove the danger, nature has given us laughter. The contraction of the blood vessels drives the blood from the brain, and the forced respiration caused by laughter prevents its exit: thus one neutralizes the other, and the equilibrium is restored."

Lotze emphasizes the psychological element in these words:

"The shudder in presence of the sublime, and the laughter over comical incidents, are unquestionably both produced, not by a transference of the physical excitations of our eyes to the nerves of the skin or the diaphragm, but by what is seen being taken up into a world of thought and estimated at the value belonging to it in the rational connection of things. The mechanism of our life has annexed this corporeal expression to the mood of mind thence evolved, but the bodily expression would never of itself, without the understanding of what it presents, give rise to the mood." (*Microcosmus*, vol. I, iii, c. 3, §4.)

Laughing also has an ethical aspect; for as St. Augustine already pointed out, "Jocari et ridere humanum est, non ferinum," joking and laughter are peculiarly human, no brute beast engages in either. (*De lib. arbit.*, c. 8). This ethical aspect was succinctly stated by St. John Chrysostom, when he wrote, in his fifteenth homily on Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews:

"It is not always time for laughter, but we may laugh in our moments of relaxation, for laughter is not evil unless indulged in at the wrong time or immoderately."

And St. Bernard has truly observed that "where laughter and wit abound, perfect charity can not reign." (*Serm. 63 ad Sororem.*)

Et haec de risu satis.

Paganism in Protestant Germany

AND THE "LOS VON ROM" MOVEMENT.

By Rev. Victor Cathrein, S. J.

II.

 ET another sign of the religious status of the cultured classes is forthcoming in the daily and periodical reading matter set before them by the press. But a few months ago a new periodical *Der Heide* [the Heathen] appeared with the avowed object of undoing the whole Christian conception of the world. In its first number the *Heide* says: "The intellectual war, not only against the Catholic Church, but against the whole Christian conception of the world, which since the days of Voltaire and the encyclopædists has been waged in secret and only by scientists, is now extending to the masses of the people. Modern man has ceased to feel as Christians feel; freely and fearlessly he confesses to his unchristian dispositions; he removes the débris which obstruct the building of new religious systems: he fights Christianity, and his fight is a fight for culture." The articles are replete with blasphemies. Among the advertisements there is one inviting those who share the editor's ideas to form themselves into a "Heidenbund" [Pagan League.]

Another periodical, the *Free Word*, favored with the contributions of many German university professors and Protestant preachers, labors, according to its program, "for the liberation of souls from the oppression of ecclesiastical dogmas to an independent religious life; hence for the complete separation of the Church from the State, and of the school from the Church, and for the introduction of a system of morals entirely independent of dividing denominational hypotheses."

It would be a wonder if the infidelity rampant among the more or less educated classes did not find its way into the broadest masses of the nation. There may still be many faithful adherents to Protestantism in the country districts, but in the towns the Evangelical Church has lost its influence. The hatred of Rome, in which all preachers agree, is the only bond which holds them together. The preachers themselves, e. g., ex-court-preacher Stöcker, often complain that the great masses of the people are entirely alienated from the church. Quite recently E. Franz, in his book on Religion, Illusion, and Intellectualism (Cöthen, 1901) deplored the complete powerlessness of the Church in influencing the lives of the people. He attributes this want of power to the illogical position taken up by the Evangelicals, who, e. g., whilst they admit the miracles of the Bible, deny the miracles of the Church. He infers that all miracles alike should be denied.

Similar complaints have been made before now. Already in 1884, Chancellor Rümelin declared in the House of Representatives of Würtemberg that the people knew nothing of the confession of faith. "In Northern and Central Germany nearly the whole male population has withdrawn from all living connection with the church." This agrees with the assertion made by one orthodox theologian at the church-diet of Würtemberg: "We have no congregations to back us up; 99 out of every 100 are in league with our enemies."

The measure of the estrangement between Church and people is accurately determined by the spread of Social Democracy. The anti-religious principles of the Social Democrats are well known. According to Bebel, their aim in religion is atheism. In their official programs they relegate religion to private life, thus contending that it ought to be entirely banished from public life. As a matter of fact, however, the great masses of Social Democrats assume an openly hostile position against Christianity and against religion in general; a glance at the anti-Christian pamphlets which they distribute broadcast among the people will leave no doubt on the subject. Only recently the Berlin publishing house "Vorwärts" sent out three pamphlets of which the titles are: Was Jesus God, Man, or Over-Man? (Uebermensch) Were the primitive Christians really Socialists? True Christianity the Enemy of Art and Science. These writings owe their origin to a resolution passed at a Social Democratic meeting at Mayence: to publish a scientific refutation of Christianity for the purpose of agitation. The conclusion of the first pamphlet reads: "The real Jesus, as historical man, can not, and must not, be set up as a religious and moral ideal for mankind; we need other, living leaders."

On what parts of Germany has Social Democracy taken the fastest hold? So far the Catholic provinces alone have been able to oppose a powerful dam to its spread; in the Evangelical provinces it grows more rapidly from year to year. In 1898 the Social Democratic candidates received 2,107,000 votes, i. e., almost one-third of all the votes given. These candidates stood chiefly for Protestant districts. The greater towns, in which Protestants preponderate, are represented, with one or two exceptions, by Social Democrats, either wholly or in part: Berlin (where in 1893 three-fifths of the votes were given to Social Democrats), Hamburg, Breslau, Magdeburg, Altona, Halle, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, Hannover, Dresden, Leipsic, Chemnitz, Stuttgart, Braunschweig, Königsberg, Darmstadt, Nuremberg, Mannheim, Elberfeld, Lübeck. In these towns the bulk of the inhabitants have evidently broken with all Christian faith.

[To be continued.]

The Alleged Miracle of Morne Rouge.



We are requested to publish a true account of the alleged miracle of Morne Rouge, of which there has been so much sensational discussion in certain newspapers. The only account so far published, is the one furnished by a correspondent of the Hearst syndicate of "yellow" American newspapers (*N. Y. Journal*, *Chicago American*, and *San Francisco Examiner*.) It is substantially as follows:

The Sisters de la Délivrance, of Morne Rouge, within the zone of Mount Pélee, had been living in constant dread long before the eruption of the volcano. The election of deputies for the French Chamber was to take place. In St. Pierre the Socialistic and Jacobine element predominated. During the electoral campaign, the Catholic clergy and religious, and Catholic mothers, had been singled out as a target for the most opprobrious insults and threats.

The corners of the principal thoroughfares and the doors and walls of the churches and convents were covered with proclamations and cartoons abounding in invectives and blasphemies. The negroes boasted that the Cathedral of St. Pierre would be converted into a dancing-hall. The Sisters were threatened with having their convent chapel changed into a theatre:

• The special correspondent of the *San Francisco Examiner* (May 31st) thus repeats the story told by Sister Mary of the Infant Jesus :

"Thus we lived in mortal dread and for two days and two nights remained praying in the Church of Our Lady of the Liberation (N. D. de la Délivrance). When the first subterraneous rumblings were heard and Mount Pélee had commenced to emit vapors, Father Maria was saying the 6 o'clock mass and was followed by Father Bruno at 7:30. The latter's mass was scarcely finished, when many of the people of the village commenced to arrive, impelled by terror, to seek a place of refuge in the church. Some consecrated hosts remained and Father Bruno began to distribute them to those who asked to receive holy communion.

"All of a sudden there appeared before the altar a vision of the Saviour, pointing towards His Most Sacred Heart. The Sisters fell on their knees, exclaiming: Behold the Sacred Heart of Jesus! The Holy Face appeared sad and pale. A few instants later the divine image disappeared.

"Then we went out and saw a horrible cloud, accompanied by thunder and lightning, descending from Mount Pélee, almost directly over our heads, upon the City of St. Pierre.

"The whole cloud was illumined with fire. It was the most fright-

ful spectacle which ever human eye beheld. We thought the end of the world had come and continued in prayer all of that terrible day. Dense vapors and black smoke enveloped us. Fire and hot mud were all around us. And yet the Convent of Morne Rouge escaped unharmed. Not one person therein perished or suffered injury.

"Another miracle happened on that terrible day. I took out my scant stock of images of the Sacred Heart and started to distribute them among the people in the church, and when the supply ought to have given out, I noticed I had as many as when I started to distribute them.

"Our Divine Saviour not only appeared to us in a vision, but in response to our prayer, He saved our lives."

Twenty-three religious arrived at Santa Lucia, where Mother Mary of the Infant Jesus related her experience, which was corroborated by all the other sisters. The correspondent adds that he interviewed the Mother Superior and three other sisters, who all four testified that they had seen the apparition of Our Lord and witnessed the miracle of the multiplication of the images.

The *Examiner* correspondent observes on his own account: "A curious detail of this event is that many of the blasphemous cartoons, of which Mother Mary speaks, remained on the walls of the ruined City of St. Pierre. They were not destroyed, though the extremities were black as coal."

It is to be hoped that the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese will institute a canonical investigation, so that we can see whether, as we strongly suspect, the "yellow" press has invented this miraculous story out of the whole cloth, or whether God has indeed deigned to ratify, by a miracle, the voice of the Sovereign Pontiff, who has so often exhorted the modern world to seek salvation in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



CONTEMPORARY CHRONICLE.

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

A New Roman Decision Regarding Social Festivities for Church and Charitable Purposes.—In answer to a query (concerning Nos. 758 and 799 of the Latin-American Plenary Council), whether bishops may tolerate or prudently approve excursions, social gatherings, fairs, and other means employed by Christian benevolence in gathering alms for the poor or for good works, especially by pious laymen, the Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs answered under date of Nov. 5th, 1901 :

"Ordinaries can tolerate and, where necessary, prudently approve, such social gatherings (conventus) as are surrounded by conditions of honesty, charity, or piety, so that the presence of priests at them is neither forbidden by the rules of the Church, nor by the (peculiar) circumstances of the country, nor that it can be called imprudent or inopportune. About all of which the Ordinaries alone are to judge, keeping before their eyes what is laid down in the III. Plenary Council of Baltimore, tit. IX, cap. V."

No. 758 of the Latin-American Plenary Council forbids principally "children's balls" and makes it a grave duty to prevent them.

No. 799 speaks of the licitness of taking up collections in church according to the manner of the Apostle and forbids "charity balls," worldly theatricals, and bull-fights for charitable purposes.

The reference to our Third Plenary Council is significant. As our readers are probably aware, §290 of the decrees of this Council prescribes that, for the prevention of abuses and of scandal, picnics, excursions, and other "concurrus qui animorum oblectandorum causa fiunt," that is to say, all sorts of festivals and entertainments, should 1. never be held at night; nor 2. on Sundays, holydays, or fastdays, 3. nor may intoxicating liquors be used on these occasions. Balls for charitable purposes are denounced as an intolerable abuse. Bishops are held in §291 to refuse their permission for all such festivals, etc., unless they are satisfied by a previous careful examination that they are not attended by proximate danger to morality nor apt to give scandal.

Unfortunately these wise provisions are a dead letter in many American dioceses. It would truly be a disgrace for us Catholics of the U. S., if the South American hierarchy would carry them out in their territory, as they are advised to do in the above quoted decision of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, while we continue to disregard them at home.

THE CATHOLIC PRESS.

Our Catholic English Weeklies.—The *Catholic Citizen* [No. 32] presents the following interesting statistics of the Catholic English press in this country :

"There are at present fifty-seven English Catholic weekly papers published in the United States. The number has risen and

fallen during the past ten years from fifty to seventy-five. How many of the fifty-seven existing weeklies are over ten years old? About forty-five. So that twelve of the new Catholic papers started during the past ten years still survive. But how many English Catholic weeklies have died during the past ten years? We have a list of fifty-three such, twelve of which are old papers, abandoned after from ten to thirty years effort. Of the existing English Catholic weeklies, less than half have been continuously published since 1880. Less than a quarter are paying investments."

We may add that less than a quarter are worth the paper they are printed on. Catholic journals, now-a-days, are published primarily, not to serve the cause of the Church, but to afford some broken-down hack or garretter a living. If these editors were men of solid classical and philosophic training, with a smattering at least of the rudiments of theology as laid down in the *Catechismus Romanus* and some little literary or journalistic talent, both the *finis operis* and the *finis operantis* might be subserved, i. e., they might both help the Catholic cause and make a living. As it is, a number of them hurt the Church by their stupid blunders and barely succeed in eking out the merest pittance.

Not only "from the business standpoint," as the *Citizen* thinks, but from various other important coigns of vantage as well, could interesting articles be written on the Catholic press of the U. S.

LITERATURE.

Appleton's Cyclopaedia.—In the June *Messenger* the editor proves that Appleton's 'Universal Cyclopaedia and Atlas' is eminently untrustworthy and, if worth consulting at all, valuable only as a storehouse of antiquated Protestant traditions and misrepresentations of our religious belief and history, and as a clue to the reason why so many of our fellow-citizens remain in ignorance of our character and regard us with suspicion and prejudice.

The editorial of the *Messenger* has now been published in pamphlet form and deserves wide circulation. It can be had gratis from the *Messenger* office, New York City.

The Holiness of the Church in the XIX. Century. From the German of Rev. M. J. Scheeben, D. D., by Members of the Young Ladies' Sodality, Holy Trinity Church, Boston, Mass. Paper, 32 pages, 12°. Benziger Bros., New York.

The young ladies who Englished this apologetical essay of Dr. Scheeben, deserve praise not only for making the treatise known to their English sisters, but also for the effective way in which they have done it. We hope that many, not only of their sisters, but brothers also, will read it and profit by it.

Stock Misrepresentations of Catholic Doctrines Answered, by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. A. Corcoran, D. D. 43 pages. The Catholic Universe Press, Cleveland, Ohio. With a preface by the Rt. Rev. Ign. F. Horstmann, D. D.

The title indicates the contents. The matter is treated in such a way that, in the words of St. Gregory, even "the knowing one does not get tired of perusing these pages, and when he is done would wish for more." The brochure deserves to be scattered

broadcast over the land for the benefit of both Catholics and Protestants.

Parental Rights in Christian Versus Secular Education. By Rev. Michael Daniel Collins, Jonesburg, Mo. Paper. 52 pages. 12^o.

A plea for a pro-rata division of the school taxes between the public and private schools. To read the essay is a penance, and we should have gladly said, the last sentence in it was the best, had we not discovered even there a mistake. It reads: "Laus Deo, et honor Beatae Mariae Virginis."

POLITICS AND SOCIOLOGY.

"Sympathetic Strikes" and Riots.—The public is learning to judge labor demonstrations more clearly than has been its custom, and it is certainly high time it did. It is right that popular sympathy should go forth to all laborers seeking by proper means to better their condition. But the present labor movement has passed far beyond a simple and orderly demonstration of this sort, and has created at length a wholly intolerable situation. As the N. Y. *Evening Post* remarks (editorial of June 19th), there is not a manufacturer, a builder, a merchant, or, in fact, any employer of organized labor, whose business arrangements are not being constantly confused or upset by interruptions of work, based often on the most frivolous pretexts. The strike in the Wilkes-Barre lace works, because employers would not discharge a few employés whose relatives were working at the mine pumps, is no exceptional case. Much was made of the effort, in last year's steel strike, to prevent the companies from employing non-union men. The attempt failed; but people who to-day undertake any work such as house-building or decorating, will make the discovery very quickly that the boycott against non-union employés is in active force. Nor is this boycott merely applied by union laborers to the non-union worker in their own trade. The union plumbers will leave their work half finished if a non-union mason or painter is employed. If it so happens that, in the rush of orders, only non-union men can be found to do the work, that makes no difference. As the strike committeeman at Wilkes-Barre remarked, when reproached for asking the soft-coal miners to break their pledges, the watchword, in scores of such cases as we have described, seems to be, "My Union, right or wrong!"

We believe that the kind of demonstrations in which labor has lately been indulging must be checked, unless the public wishes to see some very grave consequences in the future.

The Political Economy of Leo XIII.—Under this caption Mr. C. S. Devas in the current *Dublin Review*, provides a summary of the teachings of the Holy Father on social science, which he has done so much to ennable. Confronted with Socialism, Communism, Nihilism, his teachings seem to have been carefully planned upon the basis of a system of Christian and, therefore, sound philosophy (Ency. of 1879). From that basis of all knowledge we come to the basis of social life in the Christian family (Ency., March, 1880). Out of the family grows the State (Ency., Christian State, 1885; Human Liberty, 1889; Duties of Christian Citizens, 1890.)

From the rich and the poor to the duties of master and workmen is a natural step. So we have the Encyclical on Christian workmen, 1891—a scheme crowned and completed by the Encyclical on Christian Democracy, 1901. In Mr. Devas' capable hands the digest, especially of Leo's views on the question of wages, is admirably done.

Employers are guilty of injustice when they do not pay their workmen enough wages to maintain a frugal home. The excuse that the workman has accepted these wages freely, is a bad one, for he is not acting freely when he believes he must either take such wages or starve. If no other means be found to prevent such unfair contracts between employer and employé, the State should interfere. Wages are not a mere matter of contract. No contract can set aside the dictates of natural justice, which demands that employers must pay fair wages, and neither employer nor employé can lawfully be party to a bargain which does not allow the laboring man to get a decent living.

The *Tablet*, by the way, in commenting on Mr. Devas' paper, (No. 3235) expresses the wish that an English translation of Leo's encyclicals, after the manner, say, of Desclée's *Acta Leonis XIII.*, were available not only for our own people, but even more so for our friends the enemy. "Is it beyond the means of the Catholic Truth Society? May we, without incurring either excommunication, say how much we would unreluctantly surrender of its controversial literature for such a book?"

The wish is justified; but we would suggest the Paris collection as a model, rather than the *Acta Leonis* of Desclée, De Brouwer et Soc., of Bruges, which is correct and well appointed, but entirely too slow. The latest (sixth) volume (published in 1900) contains no encyclical or other pontifical document issued since 1897. In the case of such a prolific Pope as Leo XIII., a volume of encyclicals, allocutions, briefs, constitutions, etc., ought to appear at least every year.

An English Catholic Labor League.—A "Catholic Labor League" is planned for England. Although the program is not yet finished in all its details, the following points appear to have been agreed upon. A federation of all Catholic societies in England is to be established under a common council, whose members shall be the representatives of the diverse federated societies. A general secretary and a number of assistant secretaries shall carry out the resolutions of the council, give lectures on social questions, etc. A helping hand shall be given to women, forsaken or abused by their husbands, to old people, invalids, and widows. There is to be also a protective department for immigrant servant-girls and young workmen. In all larger towns boarding-houses for Catholic workmen shall be erected. Catholic literature shall be spread among the working classes. Laborers treated unjustly by their employers shall have free advice and help by lawyers engaged by the federation. The federation shall organize both for communal and State elections. Furthermore a central bank, with local branches wherever possible, shall be founded for the purpose of making small loans to deserving needy laborers; also a bureau of information to procure work to the members. All this

under the guidance of Leo XIII.'s encyclicals '*Rerum novarum*' and '*Graves de communi.*'

We wish the new federation all possible success and hope that from the example of our English brethren some of our own weak-kneed Catholics will learn that political activity is needed for the protection of our civil rights.

INSURANCE.

Why Fire Insurance is so High.—Why fire insurance rates in most of our larger cities are so enormously high, becomes plain by reading the report of the fire-patrol expert of Philadelphia for 1901. It is said there, among other things :

Building Laws.—Defective flues caused 244 fires during the year 1901. Defective flues indicate defective construction, and that indicates defective building laws. One need but to pass into some of the busier sections of our city to see that we practically have no building laws, for there are structures rising one hundred or more feet in the air, and covering practically unlimited ground area, a menace to neighborhoods, and, perhaps, to the whole district surrounding them. I have one building in mind which would destroy the whole of its surroundings if it got fairly on fire, and involve the destruction of many millions of property.

Petroleum Fires.—Four hundred and sixty-two fires from this cause occurred during the year 1901, more than 15 per cent. of the total ; while the money loss was not of great moment, aggregating less than \$30,000, the loss of life and injury to persons was enormous. It is reported that, as a result of these fires, about fifty persons lost their lives, and almost 150 others were more or less injured. No comment can be made that will add to the horror of this sacrifice or to the responsibility of those whose duty it is to render such occurrences impossible.

Unknown Causes.—Unknown again appears at the top of the list of causes of fires, both in number and amount of loss, there being 560 fires and a loss of \$1,657,143 out of a total of 3,017 fires and \$2,058,190 loss. Underwriters believe there is a large amount of fraud concealed in that item, some venturing to put forth the opinion that at least one-third of the total fire loss of the country is of that character. Nearly \$9,000,000 have been lost during the last six years from "unknown causes." How many of those fires were criminally caused, either by design or carelessness ? Why are they not thoroughly investigated ? In this connection I can but repeat my remarks of last year : "The insurance companies interested in a fire always make as thorough an investigation as they can, but as they are unable to enforce the attendance of witnesses, or compel them to testify, they are largely powerless. As the citizens at large are obliged to pay the losses out of their premiums to the companies, they have a large interest in this subject, and should make an effort to see that we have proper laws and proper officers to enforce them. I know that they can depend on the hearty coöperation of the companies in all efforts to lessen this great and growing evil."



NOTE-BOOK.

Joe J. Russell, late Democratic candidate for Congress, in addressing the graduating class of the Charleston (Mo.) public school recently, said among other things: "My good old mother never spent an idle day in her life. No one ever went hungry about her home because the cook was gone; it was never necessary to call in a fashionable dressmaker to fit a dress upon her. She never had a carpet upon the floor that she did not make herself, and well do I now remember how she took the native wool as it came from the sheep, washed it, carded it into rolls, spun it into yarn, colored it, wove it into cloth, cut and made it into clothes for me and my brothers to wear, all with her own hands. She was worth more to the world than ten thousand society women who think that they are too good and their fingers too soft to have them soiled or hardened by the touch of household work."



May a priest criticize the literary productions of his superiors? The *St. Petersburger Zeitung* of April 19th writes: "Some months ago we announced the publication of an historico-literary work by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Nedzialkowski, entitled: *Why Has Our Poetry No Nightingales?* which was severely criticized by the Rev. Charschewski. Now we learn from the *Warsch. Dn.* that said priest was disciplined for having dared to criticize a literary work of his Bishop. The Rev. Kowalewski, S. T. D., defended the Rev. Charschewski by citing a list of precedents according to which the proceeding of Bishop Nedzialkowski was unlawful. Thereupon the episcopal curia of Plozk suspended the Rev. Dr. Kowalewski. The quarrel is not yet settled, and the Catholic press is divided in two bitterly hostile camps. It would be of interest to know whether any disciplinary proceeding would have followed, had the Rev. Charschewski praised the work of his superior. Or is there a law whereby a Catholic priest in general is forbidden to criticize publicly the literary productions of his superior?"

No, there is none, even when there is question of the literary work of a pope. About the expediency of such criticisms we should say that they may not be profitable for the individual that utters them, but when they are true and free from irreverence, they may do an immense amount of good.

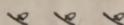


Under the pious caption, "Our Lady of Lourdes, Ravenswood," we read the following in No. 42 of the *Chicago New World*, the "official organ of the Province":

"The 'biggest show on earth' is going to pitch its tents in Ravenswood the last four days of next week. The location selected is the corner of North Ashland and Leland avenues, where a four-centerpole tent will be erected, under the canvas of which the Lourdes parish circus will be given. The circus will be for the benefit of the school building fund of the church of Our Lady of

Lourdes. A circus tent has been rented, which will accommodate three thousand people. All the young people of the parish are taking an active interest in the affair, and they are planning novelties and surprises for those who attend. Among the attractions will be ping-pong games, a lovers' lane, Irish village, Swiss village, Dahomey village, dairy farm, merry-go-round, shooting gallery, tintype gallery, horse races, dancing pavilion, vaudeville performances, palm garden, concert after the show, red lemonade and popcorn, freaks and curiosities, clowns, Japanese jugglers, foretellers of the future and gypsy camps."

Ping-pong, lover's lane, horse races, fortune-tellers, etc., all in honor of our Blessed Ladye !! Oh for the simplicity and innocence of her virgin life in Galilee !

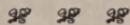


The National Federation of Catholic Societies is to hold its annual convention at Chicago in the first week in August. The President of the German Catholic Central Society informs us that the German, French, Polish, and Bohemian delegates are going to hold a preparatory conference, in order to put their autonomy demands before the convention unitedly and in definite shape.

By the way, has President Minnahan of the Federation ever delivered that lecture from the pulpit of a Protestant church in Columbus city, the announcement of which provoked the well-known outbreak of temper two or three months ago?



The Taft Commission appears to have struck a snag. The rumors in the daily press are so contradictory that we can form no judgment. The administration is very careful to assure and reassure the public that the purpose of the Commission is in no sense diplomatic, but is purely to arrive at a business-like settlement of a business matter. The Pope has placed the matter in the lands of a sub-committee of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, consisting of Cardinals Rampolla, Steinhuber, Gotti, S. Vannutelli, and Vives y Tuto—three of them religious. As Archbishop Ryan pointed out in an interview the other day, they are men who act with great deliberation and who will surely not jump at a conclusion in this important question. American Catholics will do well to suspend judgment entirely until the result of the conferences is officially announced.



If you do not see what you want, advertise for it. This is the spirit of the age, and since a church in Bristol, Tenn., advertised for a minister and got what is believed to be a good one, there seems no department of human activity where the rule may not safely be applied. The Bristol church is devoted to the denomination known as Christian, and the young man who now occupies the pulpit there, we learn from the *N. Y. Evening Post* (June 13th) arrived with his little family the other day from somewhere in Nebraska, never having seen or been seen by any member of his future congregation. Advertising for a wife is the nearest approach which comes readily to mind to the temerity of this pro-

ceeding. However, the experiment, if rash, seems to have turned out well, and therefore similar advertisements may be looked for from other quarters. From congregations particular as to their theology announcements like the following are to be expected: "Wanted—Serious young clergyman who believes in a personal devil. None having doubts about Adam and Eve need apply." Or for a church where the young and frivolous have attained an unholy domination: "Wanted—Dark-eyed minister who can play golf; must not be opposed to dancing; short sermons only."

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A despatch in a number of daily newspapers informed us the other day that "Rev. Father Barth, of Stephenson, Mich., is probably the only priest in the country who combines with his sacred duties those of a theatrical manager. Father Barth rented a local hall, and hereafter will conduct it as a theatrical enterprise in connection with his church, superintending the giving of dramatic entertainments for the edification of his parishioners, with a view to counteracting the influence of places run on a less moral plane. Brown's Comedy Company opened the new theatre with 'Her Bitter Atonement.'"

We shall wait to hear from Father Barth himself before we pronounce on this newest departure.

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In one of the public schools in McLeansboro, Ill., it is customary to begin classes with prayer. All children are gathered in one room, a teacher prays with them the "Our Father," after the Protestant style with the usual ending. When one Catholic boy stopped at this passage, the teacher asked him, why he did not pray that too. This is a fair sample of religious propaganda by public schools. There are perhaps many cases of this kind which do not come under the observation of even the local clergy, to a member of which we are indebted for the above note. Parents should exercise all the more care with their children if necessity compels them to have them instructed in the public schools.

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Here is a pretty persiflage on the modern Protestant creed revision movement:

The Committee on the Revision of the Articles of Faith had recommended the adoption of a declaration to the effect that all infants are saved. The recommendation was adopted unanimously. "Now, Mr. Moderator," said a delegate from Pittsburg, Pa., with preternatural solemnity, "I move that this be declared retroactive." But the Moderator did not seem to hear him.

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Representative Williams of Mississippi has a new negro story.

"Are you the defendant?" asked a man in the courtroom, speaking to an old negro.

"No, boss," was the reply. "I ain't done nothing to be called names like that. I'se got a lawyer here who does the defensing."

"Then who are you?"

"I'se the gentleman what stole the chickens."

